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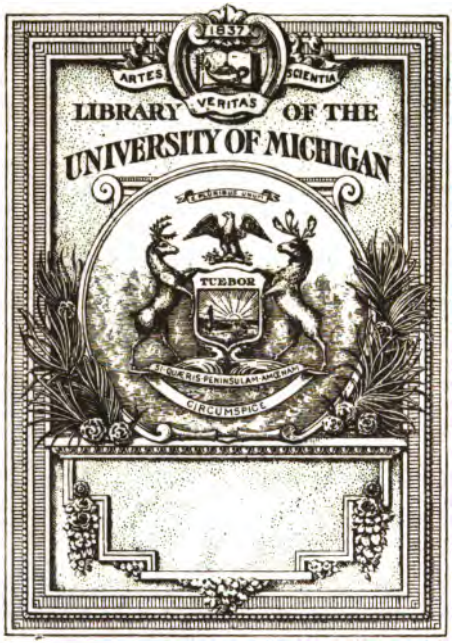
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Using the Resources of the Country Church

By

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THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

To the memory of

DOROTHY DOE GROVES

"Far off thou art, but ever nigh."

319381

PREFACE

The American people are just beginning to realize the need of the conservation of natural resources. There is evidence that the nation is slowly awakening to the necessity of a wiser use of natural wealth. The pressure of economic circumstances is emphasizing for the more thoughtful the importance of conservation. This idea of a better use of our natural resources is of the utmost social value. It augurs well for our future as a nation.

There is equal need of our taking heed of our moral resources. Men and women are more important than natural possessions. The greatest human wealth is morality. It is this which separates man from the animal and makes social life on the human plane possible. Morality represents a great social resource. It needs conservation, for upon its wise use depends human progress.

The country especially needs to conserve its moral resources. Its social problems do not attract the attention that urban prob-

lems obtain. There is, therefore, often less careful use of moral opportunity. Moral sentiment is created, but not directed into social service. This brings serious social loss.

This book is a plea for greater conservation of the moral forces and opportunities to be found in the American small community. It is based upon the belief that social progress depends most upon moral statesmanship, the wise directing of the moral energy which, fortunately, is present in every community.

I wish to thank the editors of *Rural Manhood* for permission to make use of material contributed to that periodical.

June, 1917. E. R. G.

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INTRODUCTION

The great social need of our time is the bringing of the religion of Jesus closer to the deep, concrete needs of men and women. This has always been the great social need, for men and women cannot live well together unless they root their lives in profound spiritual vitality. Sin is a human evil—not the fault of a period of time. Social ills are sins expressed in organized forms—personal selfishness showing its relationships in its social consequences. Neither the bad man nor the good man can live unto himself.

It is therefore the business of Christianity both to develop spiritual power and to put it to use. Full service is impossible if the Christian organization fails in either of these activities. Socially men must be made to feel as brothers and then they must be taught to act as such. There is no easier way socially than this path of

brotherhood and unselfish service. Without the service the brotherhood soon ceases to seem real. Without the brotherhood the service soon loses its courage and high ideals. Without spiritual vitality both brotherhood and service fail to withstand the test of time.

This generation appears, however, to have a social distinction, even if the great social problems are merely the expressions of human selfishness. It is more difficult than in earlier times to see the personal evil in the social ill. The sin of the individual is lost in the great complexity of the situation. It is difficult to fix responsibility. Often we are uncertain as to what expresses bad judgment and what shows wicked intent.

The size, organization, and intricacy of our social problems put upon us a greater moral test. We must be better than our fathers or our social life will be less Christian than theirs. Human progress requires, if we are to live a satisfactory social life, a superior morality. This it is the

task of the Christian organizations to develop.

It is the temptation of some well-feeling people to think of service as something done at a distance. The great social contributions must always come, however, from those who see needs close at hand and have the good judgment and the true courage to meet such needs. Whether Christianity keeps close to human necessities or not depends upon the interpretation it receives; therefore, Christian teachers are under obligation to keep always in mind the great necessity of making spiritual opportunity appear closely related to the social service of the individual. We must not be selfish even in our spiritual experiences. Spiritual vitality depends upon the social impulse.

No organization needs to cultivate the habit of seeing possible service near at hand more than does the country church. The relation between it and the community in which it lives is so definite that it can never have excuse for failing to realize its com-

munity responsibilities. It is of the community, in spite of itself, and its spiritual possibilities are found in its happy discovery of the largeness of its community ministration.

No service for the community can be greater than to conserve its moral forces by revealing and directing human idealism. This is the high calling of the community church. It puts to work the aspirations of the community and stimulates every good endeavor. It becomes spiritual in social service.

Rural progress depends most of all upon the conservation by the country church of its moral and spiritual resources. Men and women in village and rural life must first come under the influence of a practical idealism before other efforts to solve pressing social problems in the country and small towns can hope to have success. The church therefore that has found its social mission in a wise passion for concrete community service, has become to its place of ministration indeed the Church of God.

I

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND CITY DRIFT

The church of the small community is vitally interested in the problem of city drift. It is not to be expected that all of the youth of a small country place or village will remain at home. Many of the young men and women ought to go to the cities, for only in urban environment can they expect to find their deepest desires satisfied. On the other hand, it is often true that the city draws from the community individuals who could live a happier and healthier life in the country, were they well prepared to make the most of their rural opportunities. This movement of population from the small community to the city concerns the rural and village church profoundly. It often robs the church of its most promising leaders. It presents a problem that the church

needs to study if it attempts to conserve the human resources of the small community.

Modern psychology proves the uselessness of attempting to understand adult conduct by mere study of adult motives and circumstances, for the adult brings to each decision an accumulation of past experiences largely determining his choices, and in this personal collection the happenings of childhood and early youth have the greatest significance. It is by no means necessary that the adult, as he faces a definite situation, and is influenced in his decision by motives born of childhood environment, should recognize the fact that he acts as he does because of the events of his early life.

In many cases there is no clear understanding of the significance of early impressions, but this fact in no sense lessens the importance of the true cause of the conduct. It is reasonable to assume that any social movement which has become pronounced enough to be clearly recog-

nized as characteristic of a period of time and group of people, has behind it, acting as a source of motives, a collection of similar significant early impressions.

The movement of population toward urban centers, so strongly expressed in Europe and America at the present time, deserves study in the light of the modern teaching of psychology concerning the meaning of childhood experiences as determining adult conduct. It is everywhere admitted that this urban attraction of rural population is socially significant, and that its causes are many. It is even feared by many that it represents an unwholesome and dangerous tendency in modern life, and that it should be investigated for the purpose of discovering a reasonable check upon this drift to the cities.

No study of the mental causes behind this urban enticement can fail to discover the importance of the suggestions received by country children during their preparation for life. Suggestions influence the child profoundly, and, of course, not less

in the country than in the city. In many cases the life of the rural child is penetrated more deeply by significant suggestions, because his life, since it is spent in a less complex environment, offers a smaller quantity of suggestions, or a greater uniformity of such influence. In any case, the suggestions that enter the mind of the rural child provide a basis for explaining later actions.

Some of the deepest impressions in any child's life are the results of parents' attitudes. The child can hardly fail to be moved by the feeling and opinion of his father and mother, and usually their feelings and opinions are repeatedly expressed. Especially with reference to their occupation and environment, rural parents are likely to have attitudes that are frankly and often expressed. Many a child brought up in the country is given again and again, even perhaps several times a day during the most impressionable years, suggestions born of rural discontent.

Every occupation provides reasons for

discontent, but in the country any dissatisfaction with the conditions of the chief industry, farming, is likely to develop into discontent regarding the country itself, for the occupation and the environment are hardly to be distinguished. Indeed, in leaving the occupation of farming, it is usually necessary for such people also to leave the country towns. Not infrequently the parent expresses discontent regarding the conditions of life in the country, when the reason for his attitude is only one unhappy, perhaps temporary, condition in his occupation. Discontent seldom discriminates, and there is much to tempt the dissatisfied farmer to express his emotions in a general indictment against rural life.

It requires no argument to demonstrate that the child interprets his suggestions with a minimum of discrimination. Although negative suggestion at times operates, and the child takes the attitude opposite that of the parent, as a rule he assumes things to be as they are said to be. If the child, even after a number of years, feels the dis-

content of father or mother, or both, with reference to living in the country and respecting rural environment, it is to be expected that he will accumulate a mass of mental material which sooner or later is bound to provide motives for conduct.

In this connection, one needs to remember that all who live in the country are not there because they prefer the country to the town. They may have failed to find an opportunity to go to the city, or they may have lacked the courage to attempt a radically different life and occupation. In some cases urban-minded people do not have their urban cravings awakened until they have become so fixed in the country that economic heroism is required to pull up stakes and move to the city; and it so happens that one may be in the country but not of it, spreading discontent regarding rural conditions at every opportunity. Certainly such discontent cannot fail to suggest dissatisfaction to rural youth.

Rural education, of course, provides many opportunities for penetrating sug-

gestions, and any one who intimately knows the schools of the country will admit that their suggestions are not always friendly to rural interests. The character of some studies makes it difficult for the teacher not to emphasize urban conditions. In the endeavor after the dramatic and the ideal, the teacher is likely to draw upon urban life, since urban life circumstances provide so much that surely will appeal to the country boy and girl.

It is fair to state that a beginning has been made in the effort to utilize country life possibilities in teaching material. But one usually finds in the ordinary text-book an unconscious tendency to emphasize the urban point of view and to accept it as the social standard. Many of the striking human experiences of modern life necessarily culminate amid urban conditions, even when caused largely by rural influences. The urban center is the passion spot, and affords more opportunity for the exploration of the dramatic.

The same fact is true of ideals. The

teacher is often tempted to use urban illustrations in her effort to establish ideals of conduct. The spectacular character of moral struggle and ethical effort in the city makes urban life a source from which to draw interesting moral appeal. This bias in teaching is magnified not infrequently by the attitude of the teacher toward rural life, consciously or unconsciously. She—for of course the rural teacher is usually a woman—has often a mind filled with urban interests and a craving born of urban purposes, and she displays enthusiasm in sympathy with her deepest wishes. She may in this manner become an ambassador who represents the condition of her choice—urban life. When she is a teacher of skill, ambition, and progress, it is hardly strange that she expects to move on to a larger town, and finally, if fortunate, to a city; for upon such a career depends largely her progress in her profession—her increase in salary, her freedom, and her professional standing. The suggestion of the urban-minded teacher and the urban-inspired school sys-

tem are bound to provide effective suggestions that will later provide a basis for rural discontent.

It is because of such subtle suggestions that the child often first decides to try city life; and, even when the decisions are soon forgotten, a sort of passing childish whim, they leave a remnant of possible discontent which later in life may become an element in a complex sentiment of dissatisfaction. To value this rightly, one must remember how open the child is to suggestions, and how certain such influences are to last, and how constantly they may be received term after term from the teacher.

Rural youth obtain suggestions of enormous effect from the circumstances of their own personal careers. When the young man or woman has exhausted an economic environment that seems meager and monotonous because he or she is badly prepared by inefficient education to interpret it, there is but one thing that can be done in order to obtain relief: that is to

move away. In the city, a like failure may mean a change of occupation. To change one's occupation in the country requires usually that one leave the country. Suggestions therefore that farming does not pay, or is too laborious and unprofitable, translated into effective action, bring about a removal from both industry and locality.

The early experiences on the farm may leave a suggestion of unreasonable toil. Romantic youth cannot rest content with a vision of endless, lengthened hours of work and merely a living. Other opportunities provide a living also, and less toil. Parents have at times been responsible for this conception of farming, because they have insisted upon having their sons and daughters work unreasonably during vacation and after school. The parent who looks backward upon a generation more given to long toil than this, and uses his own earlier experiences as a standard, may the more easily commit this mistake and teach his children to hate the farm and rural life.

The adult of little imagination is likely to forget another source of experiences in youth that may suggest to the country boy attitudes that later provide a basis for discontent in regard to rural life. The boy on the farm finds at times that his holiday and vacation are encroached upon by needed labor. Weather and harvest conditions rob him of the pleasures that his village chum enjoys. Some definite plan for an outing, or some greatly desired day of sport has to be given up that the crop may not be injured.

Doubtless parents allow these disappointments to happen with little reason, and looking at the matter from an adult point of view, do not regard the boys' feelings as of serious significance; and yet, in the light of modern psychology, we know that such experiences may build up a very significant hostility to the rural environment that appears to be the cause of these agonizing disappointments. The cumulative effect of a few bitter experiences of this nature may be sufficient to turn the

boy away from the country in his heart of hearts for all time. In such cases the first opportunity to leave the country for the town will be accepted gladly, as a way of escape from a life that is emotionally intolerable.

A visit to some communities is enough to explain the migration from these communities, for they disclose themselves as having lost their self-respect. You will hear it said in such places repeatedly that no young man of worth is to be expected to remain in the town. It is no place for one who wishes to make something of himself. There is no opportunity, because the town is dead. The social atmosphere is composed of community discouragement, fault-finding, and suspicion. There is no hope among the people, no spirit of progress. A depression which may sink even to despair drives the normal youth out of the town, with the idea that all farming communities are decadent and not to be endured.

This prevailing lack of community spirit and social courage must, in certain farm-

ing communities, act as a most persistent and powerful stimulus to constant migrations. The great need in such rural communities is the development of community confidence and self-respect, and any success in bringing in a happier social attitude lessens the movement of the population to the city.

The discouraged and discontented rural community lacks most of all wise, public-spirited leaders, for naturally its powerful persons have mostly moved away. There is little that works for the upbuilding of the community, for in the nature of things, influences that move public opinion and color social feeling require strong personalities for their source, and it is just such persons that have been driven away in despair.

People from outside the community are greatly handicapped in any help that they may try to give, for the natives are both sensitive and suspicious and easily given to jealousy. Such outside assistance, given with the best of purposes, is no doubt often

trivial, tactless, and even foolish. He who attempts "rural uplift" with missionary motives and attitudes soon finds his task hopeless, as a result of the deep resentment felt by those whom he attempts to serve.

Nevertheless, in its last analysis, the problem of rural progress in a disheartened community must be solved mostly by conserving what leadership still remains, and by means of intelligent counsel and inspiration given by social and rural workers from outside the community who may become interested in it. So long as there is little constructive leadership at that point, the social condition encourages city drift.

The student of rural life is tempted to look too much to the country and too little to the city for the causes of rural migration. It is not easy to value properly the constant and impressive suggestions of urban opportunity furnished by the city. It is important to recognize that the prosperity of the city requires that it exploit itself in ways that bring people to the city to live as well as to trade. Better business

is obtained by methods of advertising that naturally lead to more people.

Modern advertising is itself a supreme illustration of effective suggestion, and its development has been for the most part in the hands of urban interests. Such advertising has forced rural people to contrast their manner of life with urban conditions, often with the result of discontent. They are drawn to the city on special occasions by alluring city publicity manipulated with scientific skill by experts, and often return to their country homes dissatisfied because of false notions regarding the pleasures of the city. Of course this is more largely true of young people and they are more open to suggestion.

Recently a carnival, skilfully advertised and staged, was held in a western city. The most popular young woman in each of the neighboring small communities, elected by ballot, was invited to attend the gathering for several days as the guest of the carnival association. Listening to one of these young women telling her experiences in

this, the most exciting week of her life, one wondered whether she could ever again feel content with the more normal joys of country life. Such an experience is merely one illustration of the countless forms that urban suggestion takes as it penetrates into the lives of rural people.

Spectacular success is largely dependent upon urban conditions of life, and such success obtains public attention. Even in the country, the successes talked about are likely to be those made possible by city life. These are given space in the magazines and daily papers edited and published in the cities, and so they naturally occupy the minds of rural readers of such periodicals.

The young man who feels the attraction of such enterprise, who wishes to have a part in big things, even if an insignificant part, who craves knowing big business at first hand, receives a suggestion that invites him cityward. When a community is itself represented by some former resident in some spectacular success, it is certain that

many young men will question their future on the farm in that locality. Thus the human product of a rural community robs it of its personality resources, and the career of the man of fame may continue to act as a tradition long after his death, and still add to the rural migration.

It is not altogether clear what effect visitors in the summer from cities have upon rural people with reference to city drift. Although a matter of accident, perhaps, depending upon the character of the city people, and important only in a limited area of the country, summer visitors, nevertheless, must provide suggestions that occasionally operate powerfully upon some young people in the country in encouraging their going to the cities.

Certain facts in some of our New England country towns, where visitors from the city return summer after summer, appear to indicate that this condition does encourage young people in going to the city. Such a result might be expected in the light of motives that govern human conduct and

the influence that luxury and leisure have in bringing about discontent in the minds of workers who look with envy upon the pleasures of others.

Perhaps this suggestion may be expected to operate more upon the girl than upon the boy, for the girl sees in the woman visitor from the city a candidate for matrimony who has advantages over her rural rival. It is not difficult to trace the influence of summer people upon the fashion of the women of the small country community, and we have every right to assume that deeper suggestions are stimulated than those that have to do with manners or dress.

II

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND ITS MORAL ADVANTAGES

It is encouraging to the social worker in the country to consider the moral resources provided by the rural environment. The minister of the small-community church does well to estimate the advantages that his field of service has over city life. Of course rural and urban society each has its moral superiorities. Each also has its peculiar disadvantages. The country worker often appears to make the mistake of not appreciating fully the advantages that are naturally furnished by the country environment.

Not to recognize clearly the resources provided for one's service is a fatal mistake. Success depends upon conditions. Moral service requires the utilization of the resources that make it possible. The

more definite and discriminating the conception of moral resources on the part of the social worker, the more fortunate it becomes for those to whom he ministers.

It is necessary also that the worker in the country have a very precise idea of the end he wishes to accomplish. Although the object is bound to be individual and to vary in its concrete form with the person for whom one works, it is, nevertheless, possible to state it in general terms. Moral service attempts to use the opportunities provided by each person's instincts and desires, that a wholesome moral career may result. This effort to moralize the life requires that the personal and social resources be both known and used.

It is folly for any worker to regard any serious social problem as having little to do with morals. At the heart of every social difficulty is its moral cause. It is equally true that a disregard of the moral resources that may be employed to solve the problem is most unfortunate.

A very great resource in the small com-

munity is the rather general neighborhood interest. In most places this is expressed in feelings that may be rightly defined as neighborhood spirit. It is common knowledge that interest is the root of sympathy. One does not care for those in whom he has no interest—at least not without great moral labor. The conditions of city life make this interest in persons difficult; the circumstances of rural and village life make it normal and inevitable that the members of the group should be interested in one another. It is indeed true that this interest does not always express itself in happy ways. It is at times the source of antagonisms and jealousies. It remains a fact, however, that people in the small community find it easy to become interested in one another and that people in the large city find it difficult to be much interested in many persons.

The relation between urban people is likely to be economic. Outside a very small group of friends, the relations have mostly to do with commercial interests

among the different members of the group. These interests appear for the most part to be of a character that forbids real sympathy, for they seem largely antagonistic. The reverse is true in the small community. The economic relations are generally few; the personal basis of association is the predominating one. People take a natural and human interest in one another.

This interest makes possible a very real and delightful fellow-feeling. Under wholesome moral influence this resource of personal interest becomes the root of a very practical and beautiful sympathy. The church of the small community has no larger or more promising asset. It can turn this sympathy into many of the most attractive human virtues.

It is doubtful whether this resource of sympathy is generally regarded at its true value, whether the churches know how to get from it all its moral wealth. Often a clear appreciation of its importance as a moral element in social life is lacking. Greater effort may be made to create sym-

pathy for distant and different people than to use the normal and promising sympathy already available. Of course the creation of the first in no way limits the second, but it is sad to see a great moral opportunity neglected, even if moral effort is bringing success at another point. Probably in all such cases the mistake is made in not clearly appreciating how much good may be made to come from the fact that in a small community people are naturally interested in one another.

The conditions of life in the small community offer also another advantage. It is easy to establish a basis for personal moral responsibility. Concerning the importance of this for the moral worker there can be no doubt. The fixing of personal responsibility is the largest problem in moral progress. A community life that naturally puts upon each person the obligations that rightly belong to him, and that holds him responsible for his actions, provides the moral worker with very great resources.

Conditions are different in the city. The

size and complexity of the city, the different classes and different standards of moral life, the lack of knowledge of the habits of one's neighbors, the indifference of one person concerning the activities of another—all of these conditions make it difficult, even impossible for the most part, to fix personal responsibility.

It is true that in the cities there are well-organized and efficient societies that have for their purpose the discovery of evil conditions and the apprehension of the persons responsible. The creation of these gives proof that urban life is weak in its ability to fix responsibility. The society attempts to do what the normal and wholesome public opinion in the small community naturally does.

Great efforts are made in the city to create a public opinion that will be concerned with evils and that will express disapproval. These endeavors of the public to find the evildoer and punish him socially are likely to be fitful, often unfair, and usually, because of their spasmodic

character, ineffective. Their partial successes cost much time, money, and thought which has to be contributed by a few public-spirited leaders in social reforms.

There is often honest doubt as to the real beginning of an evil situation. When the origin has been found the question who is to blame is still difficult to answer. It often seems unfair to put the responsibility upon any one person—so many have contributed to the evil circumstance. Indeed, the public itself, in a most general and irresponsible sense, may have been mostly to blame for the evil for which it now wishes to punish some one.

In the country and village environment there is usually a very definite and forceful fixing of responsibility. This may at times lack sympathy and perspective. It may even become cruel. It is, however, a very powerful resource for the moral worker.

It becomes the duty of the church of the small community to take advantage of this fixing of responsibility and to make it constructive. It requires education and direc-

tion. It needs to be given attention in a sympathetic way. Young people especially need to realize the importance of public opinion and the reason why it is unwise and socially wrong to become indifferent to what people may say.

Probably no one would deny that this fear of public criticism does not furnish the highest type of morality. The history of early morality, especially in primitive life, shows, nevertheless, that it is often the beginning of a moral regard which finally develops into a higher moral standard. It may wisely be used to teach men and women to value morality for its own sake.

Since men and women in small communities are certain to make moral judgments regarding the doings of their fellows, it becomes the clear duty of the church to establish the proper standard for moral criticism. Its effective service depends largely upon its ability to make the people of the community realize what the things are that are blameworthy and under what

conditions the persons responsible should be blamed. The significance of the attitude of the community itself may wisely be emphasized, and a wholesome sympathy created for the person who morally fails.

All students of country life point out that it has one large advantage over city life. The small community, especially when rural in character, makes it easy for the developing youth to obtain direct experience with nature. In the city the greater amount of experience is with persons. Persons may be tricked. Persons may be manipulated. Quick results, at least for a time, may be obtained by suggestions. It becomes easy, therefore, for the city-dweller to discount reality, to forget the fact that all of life is governed by law. In the country the direct and personal contact with nature teaches one that substantial results can be had only by knowledge of methods and honest effort. Nature cannot be deceived and is not influenced by words or methods of suggestion.

This appreciation of the lawful character of all life, this knowledge that what a man sows that must he reap, has a very large value in moral training. It is a hard lesson and man tries not to learn it. In the city he may deceive himself into believing it is not always true. In the country, however, at every point the truth is forced upon him.

This moral resource also the church needs to use to the uttermost. There is no deeper moral truth. It is surely an advantage to the moral teacher to have an environment that enforces such an important truth at every point. The church can make constant use of this common experience to make life serious and worthy. In this direct contact with a nature which is lawful, the church has in the small community a moral assistance of the greatest value.

III

THE MINISTER OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE CONSERVATION OF HIS SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

In writing of the work of a bishop, John Ruskin once said: his first duty is "at least to put himself in a position in which, at any moment, he can obtain the history from childhood of every soul in his diocese, and of its present state. Down in that back street, Bill and Nancy, knocking each other's teeth out! Does the bishop know all about it? Has he his eye upon them? Has he had his eye upon them? Can he circumstantially explain how Bill got into the habit of beating Nancy about the head? If he cannot, he is no bishop." The country worker finds it easy to fulfil much of Ruskin's ideal. The trivial happenings of a locality are not difficult to know, but the causes of these events present a different problem. To meet the need of

knowing "the present state" of the community has arisen the rural survey.

The survey is modern in a significant sense. Science, with its eagerness for trustworthy information, and business, with its emphasis upon fact, both in these days enforce the value of a careful study of community life. Everywhere in our social life mere opinion proves worthless and an increasing desire is felt for exact knowledge. Thoughtful people appreciate that community progress requires a scientific basis for community comparison and competition, such as the survey provides. The survey appeals to the rational, to the practical, to the scientific. It keeps no fellowship with exaggeration, mere sentiment, or selfish exploitation. It is honest in its searching for truth and just in its statements. In the end it proves that frankness and knowledge do more for a community's prosperity than deceit or guesses, that the first duty of any community is to know itself.

The country has every need of com-

munity study that the city has. The country problems are the great problems. In forces and opportunities the rural life has the first claim for attention and conservation. The making of a rural survey also offers a satisfaction that the more complex and changing city life does not permit. Indeed, an authority on city surveys has recently said that the city survey should be made on the unit basis, one section at a time. The rural survey gives the best possible opportunity to test the results of the social study by attempts to improve the country life. The city survey has been of great value; the rural survey must prove of even greater usefulness.

With reference to content we have surveys of rural industries, specific rural problems, and general community life. The rural survey most talked about is the study of the community in as great detail as possible. There is real need, however, of surveys of particular industries and surveys of some specific part of the community life.

A special problem that can best be met

by a preliminary survey to discover actual conditions is that of the consolidated school. Difficult as such a problem often proves in actual practice when a community is divided with reference to the proposition of consolidation, one can hardly question that the first safe step is to learn the exact facts with reference to the problem. This usually is not the step first taken, but it is always the wise beginning.

A survey needs to be made with forethought. The best possible preparation is a study, by a group of public-spirited and efficient citizens, of surveys that have been made and of the program of study that the particular community or industry demands. The ground to be covered, the methods to be followed, the organization of the survey, and the uses to be made of the completed work, all need to be carefully planned. The danger of having persons with prejudices, axes to grind, or theories to defend engage in a survey, will be appreciated by anyone with experience. The reformer needs first to be the student, and the exploiter must

be converted to the responsibilities of serious investigation.

The organization of the survey is of large importance. It is possible to obtain experts who will take entire charge of the project. For most places this is impractical. Indeed, there are some real advantages in having the survey made by citizens of the locality. Many ministers deserve great credit for the interest that they have taken in rural surveys that already have been made. However, the making of rural surveys, without assistance from public-spirited citizens, ought not to be forced upon country ministers. Men in business in rural places sometimes make the serious mistake of not being really interested in community prosperity and welfare. Live country business men of foresight will appreciate the opportunity that cooperation in community study necessarily brings. The very best results of survey organization can probably be obtained by a committee, catholic in spirit, representative of the community, not too large to work, and

willing to delegate parts of the investigation to persons best fitted to obtain the necessary information. The educational results that are bound to come to those who seriously attempt to study the life of a rural community prove of unexpected and permanent value.

Makers of rural surveys in the past have given too little attention to the problem of publicity. A survey is made for use. A rural survey needs most of all to be appreciated by the people of the community that has been studied. It cannot have its full success if it appeals only to the rural sociologist and means next to nothing to those who are personally most interested. It is clear, therefore, that the rural survey needs modern advertising and they who are engaged in making it should study the problem of making it popular. Merely to print results in pamphlet form is to waste human energy. A committee ought to have in hand the problem of publicity. Churches, papers, farmers' organizations should be urged to help make the results of the in-

vestigation known. The weekly paper should be asked to print parts of the survey in various issues. Of course it will be printed as a pamphlet for free distribution. Even here a mistake in the form in which it is printed will decrease its value. Not in small type on poor paper, but in as attractive a manner as possible, it ought to be spread broadcast among the people it concerns.

The usual rural survey is of great value. A better investigation, however, is one that is made again and again. The community becomes self-conscious of its progress and confident of its strength if it knows from time to time that it is making improvements and gaining social efficiency. A careful survey deserves to be continued from period to period. A rural survey that is never followed by later investigation must lose in scientific and practical value. The problems of today will not remain those of tomorrow. A rural survey reports, not a dead thing, but a growing, changing life of human beings. Even the

best rural survey will lose its right to authority with the passing of time.

The purpose and character of the survey must determine what it shall contain. The general community study should be very broad. In it should be found all possible information that has social value. Experience teaches that one cannot know in advance how valuable a certain gathering of facts may prove. It is easier to discard useless information than it is to repeat the investigation to obtain some valuable knowledge neglected during the first survey.

A very complete and suggestive outline for a general survey is published in Gillette's "Constructive Rural Sociology"—a book that everyone interested in rural problems needs to own. The Russell Sage Foundation has a department prepared to give information concerning the making of social surveys. The Presbyterian Board of Home Missions undertakes the making of rural surveys and has on file excellent rural surveys that already have been made.

Probably in no way can the minister of the church of the small community better conserve his social experiences than by his study of rural surveys and his interest in the surveying of his own field of labor. The minister who cares little for such constructive efforts is not likely to influence very deeply or for long the community which he attempts to serve. The rural survey is not a cure-all for every social difficulty in the country, but it fulfils a very useful function in helping the rural worker understand his problems. It is a modern tool for ministerial service, of great value when properly used.

Besides the rural survey in its usual form, there is another opportunity that comes to the rural worker in his effort to know the present state of his field, and that is the possibility of keeping for a term of years significant statistics. The patient, care-taking recorder of definite social facts, chosen because of personal interest or local importance, can hardly fail to make a valuable contribution to the

science of rural sociology. Indeed, it is the present weakness of this science that it has not a larger amount of social statistics gathered with scientific precision by interested workers. Without a large body of such observations, rural sociology cannot take its proper place as an instrument of progress.

Recently when a gathering of rural workers were asked whether they had a rather definite knowledge of social and moral conditions in their several communities they all responded affirmatively and with confidence, but when questions calling for specific knowledge were asked nearly all at once admitted their ignorance. What was the death rate of the community for the past year? What had been the record of the community respecting typhoid during a period of ten years? How many illegitimate children had been born during the year? Such questions could not be answered. Although the religious worker lives in a world of law, and has to do with moral forces governed by laws, it is natural

for him, because of his religious interests and his lack of scientific training, to neglect a study of the laws that are operating socially in his field of labor and the events that are often both the causes and results of community conditions.

Every social worker in the country, nevertheless, has good reason not to neglect a study of social forces. In the making of such a study he will do wisely, moreover, not to trust memory to make comparisons between periods and places, but to make written records, realizing that memory is fallible because of the very nature of its habits. In keeping statistics, for a considerable period, of things that seem to him useful to know and study, the rural worker, besides adding to his information, develops an attitude of mind which tends to make him expect moral forces to produce results. A ministerial friend recently regretted that he had not continued during his five-year stay in a Massachusetts parish to keep a careful record of the careers of the institutional children placed out in that

country town. Many children were placed in families in his community, and he had a very decided opinion concerning the advantages of such a system of charity and the good contribution made by the children to the social life of the place; but he had to admit that he had no scientific or satisfactory basis for his opinion.

Of course some time is required for such a record keeping and time is precious. However, one is sure of getting as a by-product of one's labor a mental habit of observing causally and of judging critically the products of social activity. The minister cannot record the histories of the children who are placed in the life of his community from institutions, without a new concern in regard to their welfare. Business appreciates this habit of mind because it is necessary to business efficiency, and there are signs that religious workers must become modern in this important particular. Gill deserves credit for his method of study in Gill and Pinchot's "The Country Church." Rural sociology

can never perform its proper service until, in addition to the investigation of rural problems by government experts and college professors, country ministers and teachers, for a period of years, record observations in such manner as to justify publication for scientific uses.

IV

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE CONSERVATION OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Nothing more clearly reveals the heart of a community than its opinion of itself. Community self-respect is not less important than that of the individual, for when a society loses its confidence in its better self, it loses all hope. The church is vitally interested in the character of the community mind, since, in a very deep sense, the church must assume considerable responsibility for whatever has become characteristic of the community to which it ministers. The church also recognizes, in proportion to the clearness with which it faces its social opportunity, that by influencing public opinion it is able most deeply to enter the life of the community.

Public spirit in any community is largely a matter of leadership. The strong men

and women, whether their strength be used for good or evil, make the village what it is. It is the social business of the church to furnish proper leadership and to train and inspire it. The church also is in duty bound to prepare its people by educational and moral instruction for a hearty support of wholesome leadership.

How quickly at times the stranger can feel the community atmosphere! Its distinctive characteristics are soon realized and their importance recognized. In a certain New England community the general feeling of discouragement would impress the least sensitive visitor. Courage appears dead. It is no surprise to hear it said everywhere, "No young man who is good for anything remains here."

Not merely is the church greatly interested in the mood of the community; in a most real sense in such a mood the church may discover its own social value. Years of Christian teaching surely ought to make some impression upon the general thought of the community. Unless uncommon

economic changes have disrupted the normal life of the people, the prevailing attitude of mind in a community reveals the quality of the social influence of the church.

A difficulty in the past has been the waste of personal influence for community progress as a result of the narrow interpretation of the social obligation of the church. Strong men and women who were by nature made leaders have often not been enlisted by the church in efforts for community progress. In some places at least the welfare of the church itself, in a most institutional and selfish sense, has been the obligation pressed forward, and there has been no heroic response. In traveling about, one sometimes finds a community where some helpful social enterprise has been carried out with success by persons who have received little support from the churches and who have recognized little in common with the churches, having taken their isolation as a matter of course. The church of the small community fails so-

cially when it is not catholic enough to contribute liberally of its influence in specific encouragement of any movement for social betterment, whether community-organized or church-controlled.

In his attack upon social evils and his impatience with unwholesome conditions, the pastor of the village and country church needs ever to be most careful that he does not destroy community self-respect. Destructive criticism may be both honest and just without being wise. Merely to be right is by no means enough. Nothing requires greater skill, more knowledge of human nature, more unselfish thinking, than criticism and denunciation. The promise of better things is based upon proper community pride, and the whole matter is made hopeless if the effort for reform kills the respect of the community for itself. It is especially important to realize that the first effect of such criticism may not disclose its deeper result. It is possible to stir protests and win approval and yet poison the sources of effective

reconstruction. The safe method emphasizes what may be as well as declares what is. Indirect criticism is more profitable and lasting, even if direct denunciation stings more. The community may come to accept the unhappy picture drawn of it as its true likeness and give up all social ambition. In the process of what is often really mere fault-finding, the pastor may destroy the basis of confidence, enthusiasm, and courage which he needs for reconstruction.

The church of the small community may conserve public spirit by emphasis upon the resources of the community. The people should be made conscious of every important element that enters their social life. Especially ought they to be made familiar with the past history of the community. It is useless to expect wholesome community pride when nothing is given upon which to build pride. Some of the least enterprising of our small communities have had in times past a most interesting history. The just recognition of impor-

tant historical events, of former inhabitants of power, fame, and character, provides substance for the growth of good, social self-respect. Is it not wisdom for the church of the small community to devote at least one Sunday a year to a consideration of the history and traditions of the locality?

Surely such a church ought not to end a year without giving over one Sunday to the consideration of the progress the community has made during the year. Nothing will do more to develop concrete social thinking among church people than a community progress Sunday. Upon such a day attention is focused upon the community successes, partial or complete, upon the evident achievements of the people of the place in various departments of social life. This custom in any community in a term of years will prove helpful, because it tends to social construction and confidence.

An open forum for an evening Sunday service, even in some small communities,

has proven a successful means of making the community socially self-conscious and critical without becoming well-satisfied or pessimistic. It gives the forward view and provides for progress, just as appreciation of the past strengthens community self-respect. Probably no social effort yields more various by-products of lasting value than an interesting open forum. In the period for questions it has the democratic element which is lacking in the usual address or lecture and it is thereby made more impressive.

Some small communities need especially to consider the immigrant that has entered its life. He is sometimes left outside the socializing spirit of the community. This causes social loss—at times serious. The future of any community may really be in the hands of such people and it is folly to ask the public school by itself to meet the obligation that rests upon all the native Americans. The church that wishes to help the immigrants often will find that first of all it must educate its own people

to appreciate and respect the new-comers. This is no difficult task. Every national type of human being has worth enough to be valued if rightly understood. The work of the church may be to interpret the history and characteristics of the immigrants, that the community life may be organic and Christian.

No pastor seriously undertakes social service in the small community without soon finding that such a community by itself is seriously limited. Important changes that will build up wholesome spirit in our smaller villages and rural places require the cooperation of several communities. This is most clearly seen in the problem of recreation and entertainment, but at present few are socially educated to the point of realizing this. The social efforts of progressive churches are developing a new need of cooperation, a cooperation between communities. Men are eager to learn of the experiences of other communities. Enterprises are being considered that can be successfully carried

out only by community cooperation, since they are too costly for one locality to undertake. An example of this is the attempt of some village churches to find a way to make use of the motion picture for constructive purposes. This need of a new kind of cooperation is a most promising fact. Communities may learn of one another how skilfully to employ their moral forces and may enter into helpful cooperation and wholesome rivalry in the conservation of community resources.

V

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE CONSERVATION OF THE FAMILY

In these modern days the family finds its largest opportunity in the country. Urban social conditions hamper the healthy functioning of the home and limit its efficiency. One of the most important advantages offered those living in the country as compared with those in the city is the greater opportunity provided for family association. Members of the family more easily realize their common interests. More time is spent together, resulting, under favorable circumstances, in a richer fellowship than city people easily obtain. Family failures are very apparent in the country, and the influence of the family is usually most significant. It is right, therefore, to regard the family as a great social resource in the country and to insist that

its conservation should be eagerly desired by all who have rural welfare at heart. It is impossible to consider seriously the work of the country church, the social ministration of religion, without giving thought to the problems of the family in their relation to the church.

When the church assumes concrete tasks, and, with the spirit of social passion, covets powerful social resources, it turns, as by instinct, to the family as one of its greatest instruments for service. When on the other hand it undertakes its mission with spiritual and moral lassitude, it seldom discovers definitely and significantly how much of its ethical and religious opportunity centers in the home. The church that conceives itself as the envoy of truth, goodness, and beauty soon uncovers the potential value of the family as a social organization in the country. Enlisting earnest lovers of truth in fruitful quests for the great ideals of life requires attention to family conditions. Bringing goodness into the ordinary life where it can

prosper and win vitality demands that the family shall receive its rightful recognition as a source of ethical causes that quickly show themselves in conduct. Disclosing the sweetness and health that come from seeing beauty in common things is a task that needs the cooperation of deep, sympathetic, inspiring family association. It is the mark of the conscientious church that it thinks of its mission in family terms, that it expects to find difficulties and resources as the result of family influences.

Neglect of the family weakens the church. By failure to realize concretely the family's social importance, the church often attacks blindly some obvious evil. Individuals are seldom understood correctly apart from family training. Openly defiant wickedness feeds upon unwholesome family conditions, drawing its vigor largely from the weaknesses, ignorance, and selfishness of parents. It is useless to attempt social reform by merely trying to reconstruct individual motives and to correct personal conduct. The great fountain

of evil needs specific attention. It is in its failure clearly to analyze problems of conduct into their elementary influences that the church often fails in effectiveness. That the bad family poisons life is common thought indeed. A penetration into the way that a definite home is proving a social menace is far from common. A specific treatment of the ills of the family, after an analysis carried through with scientific precision, is most unusual; and yet such painstaking diagnosis enables the church to conserve its moral efforts and to multiply its successes.

It is a striking fact, that has not been sufficiently pondered upon by religious people, that social improvement cannot be permanent when the family does not receive great emphasis as a fundamental factor in any social situation. Persuasion and inspiration may stimulate the individual, but no activity can lift up a social group for any length of time that does not appreciate the strategic value of the family. The family advance measures the real pro-

gress of the movement, and registers the success of the reformation. There is a temptation felt by all morally earnest people in enthusiastic social service to treat individuals as detached from their homes. It is easier to rescue from the home than to rescue the home from its misfortune. Although such service brings immediate returns, and occasionally most gratifying success, it is clear to the thoughtful social worker that abiding ethical advance requires the improving of the family. This is especially true in the small community, because of the enormous functions that the family still performs. The church that craves efficiency in things that count and that wishes to do service that wins lasting results will surely consider the family element in every social and moral problem.

The church in the small community has no greater need than to teach its constituency to assume specific moral service. Human progress depends at present most of all upon getting good purposes expressed in actual service. This is certainly pro-

foundly true of the people who come constantly under the influence of the Christian churches. There is more goodness at hand than is being utilized in efforts really significant. Any attempt to bring good people face to face with concrete responsibility that involves causal influences is most wholesome. When the church of the small community treats the family as a training school for loyalty to responsibility, it ministers to a great need in the lives of well-meaning people. It directs the attention of spiritually ambitious men and women to immediate opportunities for magnificent service in the home. The family becomes a mission field and the parent a missionary. The child, awakening to cravings of his deeper moral nature, is shown that the home is the first testing-place for his new ideals, the proper place for honest purposes to become actualized. The condition of the family life in the small community makes the emphasis of the moral meaning of the home most natural. He who faces things as they are and is morally sincere,

grants, as he looks over the situation in the small community, that the family is the proper place for moral responsibility to assume its obligations, at least a very necessary place for moral effort. The home has always had a large social function as a school for morals, and it is the business of the church in the small community to make full use of so great an instrument.

There can be no doubt that any effort on the part of the church to consider its service in the community with special reference to family needs, in the spirit of science, with regard to the operation of cause and effect, means the enriching of the inspirational efforts of the organization. Preaching fails to carry force often because it is so subjective. It describes qualities that are desirable and emphasizes methods of obtaining these qualities only in a verbal way. The objective manner of thinking on the part of the scientist, who detects conditions and precisely administers what the occasion demands, is not un-

commonly absent from the sermon. In an age when the people are increasingly being trained to take an objective and causal view of problems, and when practicality is a virtue, the subjective exhortation ceases to carry conviction. The pastor of the country church who treats moral difficulties from a causal point of view, and who studies the family life as a source of moral causes, gets into his sermons the same concreteness that has become a part of his personality. He never covers his unwillingness or his inability to think his moral problems down to their fundamental elements by the use of such an abstract term as "sin." The vocabulary even of the sermon is protected from a mere emotional meaning—a result that follows the use of general ideas—and is characterized by specific thinking that naturally leads to concrete activity. Such preaching commands attention.

The church of the small community at times assumes a dangerous policy toward the family. The church finds itself con-

fronted with the sad fact that the family life is far from reasonable efficiency, this failure resulting in the neglect of the needs of the children at important points. It faces a situation and not a theory, and is therefore deeply tempted to meet the problem by methods that will bring immediate relief. Unconsciously it undertakes to fill up the void that the family failures are creating in the lives of children and youth. The profound fact is that the family is relieved often in this way of much of its responsibility. If the school and church are eager to assume obligations that the home fails to meet, it is natural for the home to be contented in spite of its inefficiency. And yet the home is made healthy only by trying to meet its serious responsibilities. Parents respond with an easy conscience to the invitation to give over some of their proper obligations, and thus new needs are created for the school and church to attempt to satisfy. The end of such an evolution may be the elimination of the home as an efficient social organiza-

tion. When the attack that is foreshadowed by many currents in present-day thinking is made upon the home, its defenders may find that it has already lost much from its important functions. It is bad business for the church to rob the home of any of its responsibility by a benevolent effort to fill the void that family carelessness is causing. The slower but wiser policy calls for a heroic attempt to invigorate the family, and to make it morally self-supporting. This does not, of course, mean that the church should not work with children; it means that such work must not be a method of relieving the home of service it is equipped to perform.

The church must teach the adults that the home cannot safely attempt to farm out its proper responsibilities to any social organization whatsoever. Conditions in the small community make it possible for such teaching to obtain significant results. The home is by no means hopelessly outrivaled; it still has courage to assume its

normal tasks. It is easy indeed, however, for the church to encourage the parents in their thinking that a larger and larger part of the life of the children must be given over to experts who work through special institutions or to persons who have special gifts with children. Home-love is still the chief need of the child—intelligent affection. The church of the small community proves its wisdom when it works through the home rather than for the home.

VI

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE CONSERVATION OF RECREATION

There is a very general and an increasing recognition of the need of providing rural young people with opportunities for wholesome play, and it promises happier and healthier days for country youth. This does not mean, of course, that the demand for play is something modern. Indeed, the facts are otherwise. Man has been a player from the beginning. Even animals play. The savage also gives his testimony regarding the great human need of play, for, however brutal his habits and low his standard of living, he plays, plays a great deal, and finds in his play a deep satisfaction, and the gain from his play is not altogether personal, for in primitive life play performs a most important social service. Although there have been days in the past when play has been called wicked

frivolity, yet even at such times men have needed recreation and have found it, contrary to their theory, in their religious activities in such forms as festivities, pageants, and passion plays.

Although play is not by any means a modern invention, nevertheless we are just beginning to understand its social value. It has in recent times been too much thought of as significant only for the pleasure of the individual. Since it has been highly organized and commercialized, however, recreation has appeared in its true light. Thinking people have been forced to see that play is a great social influence, a most potent factor in building or destroying character, and, since the appetite for play is stimulated by all the skill at the command of great modern business organizations, it is being clearly understood that the child, if society is to be wholesome, must be protected and guided in his play. The church, therefore, is not indifferent to the problem of recreation, and especially is this true of the efficient church

in the country and small community. Conditions of modern life, requiring relief and recuperation from nervous strain, demand play increasingly in some form for adults, and it is no longer possible to consider the recreation problem in either city or country as merely having to do with the welfare of children. Play, therefore, has become a community problem, and one that has to do with the interests of all the people of the community.

The church in the small community has, or at least may have, much influence upon the recreation of the community and its responsibility is in proportion to its opportunity. It may, of course, as churches at times have—happily not often of late—set itself in opposition to recreation. In pleasure, however clean and wholesome, refreshing and socializing, it may see merely a trivial attitude, a frivolous spirit. It may, though fortunately it seldom does, look upon all play as an enemy of serious moral character, and may frown upon amusement at every opportunity. This attitude on the

part of the church creates, in the degree that it is successful, a void in the life of the people, especially of the young, and by sad experience wise people have discovered that such an emptiness not seldom becomes a source of moral corruption. Rural social history has proven that, when the church has been hostile toward recreation, amusement has become an instrument in the hands of the evil forces and an instrument of power over young life. The church, also in times past, because of its proper opposition to unwholesome amusements, has forgotten the need of replacing evil recreation with good, and has been content with merely denouncing that for which a substitute needed to be found.

A more common mistake on the part of the church of the small community has been a practical indifference to recreational needs. The church has failed to appreciate in such cases the importance that amusement has as a source of moral, social influence. Perhaps the problem of evil recreation has been talked about; it

may even have become a source of worry, but no effective action in regard to the matter has been carried out. Good people have forgotten that the power for evil contained in bad amusements is clear proof of the great social service that proper recreation may perform.

The only right attitude for a Christian church to take toward recreation is that of sympathy and support. It is in duty bound to appreciate so great a source of social influence, and to attempt its protection from the preying selfishness of commercial exploitation. Its mission in society is best accomplished by its taking strategic possession of the places where human character is most naturally and profoundly influenced, and certainly one such place is recreation.

When the church of the small community assumes the proper attitude toward the problem, it is called upon to study how to make its influence count. It often awakens to the fact—and it is real spiritual heroism to admit the situation—that its influence

upon the community recreations is very little; indeed, it may discover that it has not even realized the character of some of the most significant recreations that have gotten into the community life.

In its attempt to meet the recreation problem, the church faces the question whether it must itself provide wholesome recreation. The answer depends upon circumstances. In most cases it is safer and wiser for the church to inspire other organizations to take over the problem. In such cases the church best serves by its teaching. There are advantages in the school becoming the recreational center, or in some new organization being created to meet the specific problem. The church can then assume the responsibility of keeping the community interested, in developing the craving for good forms of play.

The distinctly rural church has the largest opportunity along these lines of service at present, because it can so quickly make its influence count. The rural young people are most likely to suffer

from a lack of proper recreation. The church is fortunate that can turn to the Young Men's Christian Association for expert help in solving the recreation problem of the community. When there are several churches in the same community, there is the greatest need of constructive work being carried on by an organization that can unite all the Christian organizations in a common social service. It is most unfortunate in such circumstances if each church strives to organize recreation for its own people by itself.

The mistake is still being made in many small villages and country places of thinking of play as a need only for the young people and children. In rural life especially, emphasis must be placed upon adult recreation. Social health, mental vigor, moral sanity, demand more play, more freedom, more relief from labor for adults living and working in the country. Often rest from labor means cheap dissipation or empty idleness. A great social vitalizing experience is thrown away because no ef-

fort is made to conserve adult recreational needs.

It is not strange to hear the failure of cooperation among rural people charged up to their lack of play experience. We have every reason to regard the statement seriously, for play teaches cooperation and creates friendly feeling as few things can. It certainly seems true in some rural places that there is less neighborhood recreation and fellowship than there formerly was. There has perhaps been created a taste for urban stimulating pleasures and a failure to realize the neighborhood opportunities that contain deeper satisfactions than the city affords. Here and there we find foolish efforts to import the city amusements into the country rather than an honest effort to discover the possibilities of the country itself. In the end the country must find its own joys or grow barren.

There appears to be one form of recreation that churches in small villages and rural places ought to encourage greatly, and that is reading and study clubs. It is

no secret that some of our most serious readers are not in the cities, but in the country. The conditions of rural life tend to deepen the impression of whatever is read. It is a great pity that often the reading is of little worth because the material itself has almost no value. Serious reading of trivial, perhaps cheap, literature represents a very great loss, and the community church needs to conserve the mental cravings of its people. There is need of more study and reading clubs in the country—the getting together of people who like to read along similar lines that they may profit from their intellectual fellowship. The splendid success of such organizations in some rural towns, often as a result of the influence of the pastor of a church, proves how very valuable this mental form of recreation may prove in the social life of country people.

VII

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE CONSERVATION OF PHYSICAL HEALTH

The country has the conditions of health. Rural health, nevertheless, is not in proportion to the opportunities offered by the wholesome environment of country people. There appears to be a difference of opinion respecting rural health as compared with that of urban people. An eminent statistician expresses the opinion that "the mortality-rates from all important diseases are measurably lower among American farmers than among numerous employments typical of modern city life in the United States. The statistical evidence, therefore, is quite conclusive that in the registration area of the United States, which, however, excludes most of the rural sections of western and southern states, the mortality-rate from all causes combined, and from practically all

the important causes, is much less in the rural districts than in the cities."[1] A report made for the United States Bureau of Education concerning a survey made of eight eastern states is said to give "overwhelming evidence against the healthfulness of the country as compared with the city."[2] "The Wisconsin Anti-tuberculosis League, a year or so ago, made a very careful and exact sanitary survey of a certain rural district in that state, relative to the amount of this disease, and found that in some parts of this district the death-rate from tuberculosis exceeded that of Milwaukee, Wisconsin's largest city."[3] In regard to one fact there is, however, general agreement—the health of rural people is not so great as it ought to be, in the light of the opportunities provided by the country for health.

[1] F. L. Hoffmann, "Rural Health and Welfare," pp. 12, 9.

[2] Report of National Conference of Charities and Corrections 1914, p. 154.

[3] Bashore, "Overcrowding and Defective Housing in Rural Districts," p. 88.

Doubtless also there is little question that country people are less concerned with problems of health than they need to be. It is too often assumed without reason that rural conditions in regard to health are satisfactory enough not to require community investigation. As a result, we have little public effort for improvement. In urban centers much progress is being made in the conservation of public health and there are equal motives for cooperative effort in the country along the same lines. The country cannot safely rely upon its natural advantages. In such effort for improved conditions of living the church has a clear duty. It should lead.

The church can be indifferent only because of social ignorance. It confesses fatal narrowness of spiritual vision when it refuses to consider physical welfare as included in its community mission. It blinds itself to the far-reaching results of poor health, of harmful habits of living. Seldom indeed in these days can one find a church consciously assuming such a po-

sition, but too frequently we find churches in the country that act as if they had little responsibility for the physical well-being of the people.

The community-spirited church regards the problem of health as a moral matter. Unnecessary suffering and disease mean a loss to the community of its human resources. Human personality is too valuable to be lost to the community as a result of unwholesome living conditions, brought about by public indifference, ignorance, and selfishness. Suffering reduces human efficiency, it lowers the vitality of the contribution made to the community by the unfortunate sufferer. Suffering which results from conditions that are the expression of a low public intelligence and sense of responsibility becomes a moral matter by its very existence, for it is the business of the church to minister to wholesome happiness.

Indeed, from a most narrow point of view, the church is interested in problems of health, for some diseases have a most

definite moral significance. Consumption, for example, has often a most remarkable influence upon the sex life of the individual. Passion often becomes abnormally intense as a result of the development of tuberculosis. Science shows also that alcoholism is at times the result of a diseased condition of the body. Paresis, a nervous disease usually resulting from syphilis, often has a clear series of moral results of great social importance. A man of high social standing, of good reputation, perhaps a man of great service socially, begins suddenly to show a most unexplainable change in personal habits and in morals. He becomes a scandal in the community and perhaps as a consequence some church is brought into disrepute. And the entire moral change is merely a part of the symptoms of this terrible disease, paresis, caused by a syphilitic infection many years previously. Even when the church accepts little concrete responsibility for the health of the community, it has to take account of problems that are born of bad physical conditions.

Modern science is making this relation between morals and health increasingly clear.

The efficient Christian church has in the small community a very definite and serious work that it ought to do for the health of the people. It surely ought to teach in concrete terms a proper respect for the body. This teaching cannot safely be limited to instruction in regard to two or three physical vices. Respect for the body must be cultivated by attention to many facts concerning the needs, uses, and dangers of one's physical self. Some of this teaching may be undertaken wisely in cooperation with the doctor; some of it may be a by-product of an interesting and practical sermon. Without doubt some instruction should be carried on by special classes—perhaps as a part of the Sunday school work. Christianity teaches that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and no church can do its proper service in the small community when it does not concern itself thoughtfully and broadly with the physical welfare of the people.

It is even necessary at the present time in many country places that country people be taught in an interesting and sane way the causes of some of the most important diseases. The church ought either to inspire such an undertaking or assume the task itself. The sad story of lung houses, overcrowding, and insanitary conditions among rural people has been forcefully and briefly told by Dr. Bashore in his recent book, "Overcrowding and Defective Housing in Rural Districts." These unnecessary conditions in the country demand very practical instruction. The church can easily bring about some method by which this information respecting rural physical dangers and needs can be given and driven home. Rural people of intelligence are prone to consider bad houses and insanitary conditions as individual problems. This is by no means true. Germs are no respecter of persons. Conditions that menace an individual or a family also endanger the entire community.

It is particularly important in the coun-

try to study the physical needs of children. Infant mortality is a problem in the country as certainly as in the city, and it must be solved in both places by publicity and education. The country school is very bad indeed with reference to its influence physically upon the growing children, as no one can doubt who knows the rural school personally. It is severe criticism, considering the physical resources of the country school, when Dr. Bashore affirms "that all city children, no matter what city or where, attend school under sanitary conditions far ahead of anything in the country." This problem of the rural child and his school surroundings is a vital one for the church, for from the school come the human resources upon which the organization later must depend. Church indifference to the physical needs of the school condemns the church as socially inefficient and blind to its large moral mission. Many a schoolman will contrast the city open-air school with the sickening atmosphere of some rural school which has never been forgotten

because of the impression received upon visiting it. It is a sad and discouraging illustration of the character of some of our rural teaching that in such a school a limited amount of instruction regarding physical hygiene is required by the law of the state.

Emphasis upon matters that concern public health is wholesome in teaching the people to undertake community self-examination. Needs can be easily found and made forceful when they are physical in character. A community often turns from an honest self-examination at this point to the consideration of matters equally important, but not so easily seen. The church itself may study its social value by an investigation of public health conditions and its influence in reforming these. If it has no real public influence respecting such apparent needs, it may well question whether its spiritual service is deeply successful. Surely if it has no ability to make wholesome physical conditions, it cannot assume that it is a moral force in the com-

munity. "If in the rural districts we can substitute common community activities for self-centered interests, kindliness for suspiciousness, helpfulness for indifference; if we can inspire a better spirit of cooperation in agricultural pursuits, in civic betterment, in home-making and child-raising; in other words, if we can bring to these people a wholesome knowledge of hygiene in the best understanding of the word, it will mean to them a richer, fuller life, expressing itself in a generation of sound, healthy people." These words of a lover of country welfare contain a truth, but the better plan is to have a church of vision, courage, and social passion lead the people themselves to a higher standard of physical being.

The honest church will at least attend to the health problems that center about its own building. There can be no great promise in a sermon on taking good care of the body preached to people who are breathing poison as a result of vicious indifference to or ignorance of the matter of

ventilation. He who has been invited to speak in a dirty church building, pointedly disclosing the character of an inefficient janitor and a careless people, will confess to a feeling of depression after looking about the building. The clean and the sanitary church building is a prerequisite to any successful effort for the bettering of public health conditions by the church. In conserving rural health resources, the church often awakens to the fact that it has itself been negligent with reference to its own institutional influence.

VIII

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE CONSERVATION OF MENTAL HEALTH

In our present social life the problem of mental abnormality looms large. Mental disorder, one of the most dangerous and pathetic of human afflictions, is becoming painfully frequent. Although we have reason to suppose that insanity is more common in the city than in the country, it is, nevertheless, a serious problem for the country community. The layman, in thinking of mental abnormality, has in mind usually the idea of insanity expressed in clear and forceful peculiarities of conduct. Because of this he often fails to appreciate a great many cases of mental unsoundness which express themselves in foolish, anti-social, or immoral behavior. The problem of mental health is larger than the problem of mental sanity in the

popular sense. The student of the mind is finding increasingly that mental instability is the real cause of problems of conduct that have been considered merely moral in character.

All conduct, whether good or bad, is related to mental states, and is therefore influenced by the normality or abnormality of the mind. It is natural that unsoundness of mind should express itself in abnormal conduct of various forms. Modern science reveals the relation between mental disorder or instability and the unwholesome conduct which is characteristic of the vicious and delinquent classes. It is clearly shown that there is a direct connection between disordered mental condition and alcoholism, vagrancy, prostitution, pauperism, and crime. Studies of criminal classes are increasingly placing emphasis upon the mental abnormality which is the real cause of the anti-social conduct. Investigations made by experts in clinic psychology are changing the conception of the sociologist regarding crime. Science has,

for example, recently made a statement very different from its earlier opinion concerning the causes of prostitution.

The new significance that mental unwholesomeness has in social life as a result of the modern teaching of science makes the whole problem of mind disorder of importance to the church of the small community. The efficient church attempts to deal with its problems in the light of present knowledge and to treat every case from the viewpoint of causation. It follows, therefore, that the church must give attention to the growing mental instability that produces so many of the concrete personal misfortunes. Its interest in the results of mental disorder forces it to take an intelligent interest in the cause itself.

It might seem at first thought as if the church could do nothing to conserve the mind. Valuable as it would be for a clearer insight into the nature of certain moral difficulties, the knowledge of the significance of mental instability might seem of no greater use. This, however, is not true.

The service of the church, especially in the small community, is necessarily related to the problem of mind conservation. It is clearly in the power of the church to do its part to lessen the tragedies of life that appear in the form of mind disease. On the other hand, who can doubt that careless and unwholesome church activity adds somewhat to the influences that operate to increase mind disorder?

Troubles of the mind are often the result of bad habits. The expert makes much of the value of good training as a means of decreasing insanity and nervous diseases. The habits that the child forms or fails to form may decide years later whether the adult is to be mentally or nervously sound or not. It surprises the layman to hear the doctor insist that the relief of neurasthenia largely depends upon the getting rid of bad habits and the creation of new habits. The significance of habit formation in the conservation of the mind brings again to the attention of the church of the small community its relation to the home.

Parents help to injure the mental health of their children because they do not understand the problem of child training. Often they merely lack an appreciation of the significance of the events of early child life. It would seem as if the church that covets service must find in the need of awakening the home to its responsibilities a very inviting opportunity.

There is one type of habit formation that the church especially needs to understand —the habit of day-dreaming. Thinking that satisfies the person without working itself out into real activity is dangerous by its very nature. Modern psychology, the Freudian psychology especially, makes this fact very clear. Insanity itself is at times the relief that an extreme kind of day-dreaming gives in contrast with the painful experiences of reality. The church needs to impress this fact, not only upon teachers and parents, but also upon its own conscience. The pastor especially must meditate upon the significance of the day-dreaming weakness in human life, for the

church itself may be given to the day-dreaming tendency. Religion may be used to cover up an unwillingness to face reality, to meet the moral needs of the situation. The minister must expect persons of mental instability to turn to religion for help. In such cases it is very necessary that the church really help. Selfishness often is the deep root of mental disorder and day-dreaming its fruit. Men and women who have neither the courage nor the unselfishness to face a hard situation turn to religion as an opportunity for the indulging of a pernicious kind of day-dreaming. Christianity has proven its moral supremacy in its refusal to cater to this peculiar kind of selfishness. The spirit of the church becomes unwholesome when encouragement is given, consciously or unconsciously, to this bad habit which satisfies the desires of a person by the creations of fancy. On the other hand, in so far as the church insists upon ideals being carried to practice it decreases the danger that day-dreaming will become a community problem.

The first steps toward mind unwholesomeness are sometimes taken in the effort to retreat from a hard personal ordeal. The individual turns his back upon reality because of lack of courage. The church often saves one from this danger by giving him a sense of the resources upon which he can call for help. The religious experience of the person becomes a source of confidence, and the tendency to give up the struggle by being satisfied with dreams of victory comes to an end. The personality is saved from moral ruin, perhaps from mental disorder.

The church may perform the same service for those who suffer from morbid fears. Fear is the enemy of mental health. Fear often originates as a result of moral disorder. Many times it starts in experiences in childhood that are not wisely treated by parents or that are concealed from parents. The wiser the parent, the less the danger of such an experience troubling the child. Wrong methods of moral teaching in the church, especially in the Sunday school,

occasionally false teaching, are causes of morbid fears. It is usually true that these fears disappear when they are faced and become harmful only when the person attempts to run away from them.

In so far as the church teaches a positive morality that leads men and women, boys and girls, to fight their moral battles, it decreases the tendency toward morbid fears. It is a surprise at first to the student of the problem how often a morbid fear expresses itself in anti-social or immoral conduct.

Nothing conserves the mind so much as having a healthy interest in life. It is a splendid protection against both morbid feeling and morbid thinking. It keeps one from wishing to enjoy the poisonous pleasures of day-dreaming. It leads to wholesome activity. It invigorates the life and takes one's thought off one's self by occupying the attention with captivating purposes. This fact the church cannot safely forget. The barren individual life needs the same treatment that the barren

social life requires. A more interesting community life often saves people from losing their personal interest in normal activity. The life of the small community must be made vital in order to be wholesome. The individual who finds little in life to live for, who faces an uninviting situation, must be led to a deeper understanding of the meaning of human experience.

In so far as the church lifts the moral standard of a community and decreases vice, it ministers to the mental well-being of the people. Immorality is very closely connected with mind disorder. The dissolute life often expresses itself in insanity. This fact especially appears in the study of paresis, a brain disease which generally originates from syphilitic infection. Alcoholism also is a cause of insanity. Drug habits lead to mental disorders. It is difficult to have a sound mind in a sound body unless the basis of both is made a sound morality. Self-control and high ideals may not always prevent insanity, but without doubt they

are protective in their tendency and probably in many cases guard the life with a somewhat neurotic heredity from serious mental difficulty.

IX

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE PROBLEM OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED

A recent visit to a country school to give advice concerning two children who were charged with immoral conduct and who proved to be mentally defective emphasized anew the problem of moral segregation in the country community. City moral problems, without doubt, because of their massive characteristics are usually spectacular and easily attract the attention of students of social life. Moral problems in the country are more likely to be underestimated because they usually appear as isolated and individual, without the magnitude that challenges investigation. Perhaps a just comparison between the moral dangers of urban life and those of rural life is both impossible and unprofitable, but it is clear that the forms which moral problems take must differ somewhat in the two types of

community life. The city parent has one advantage in meeting moral difficulties which seems of no small value to the thoughtful country father and mother. Urban conditions permit the more careful parents to segregate their children, at least to some degree, from immoral suggestions. If vice in the city is more organized and exploited, it is also true that it need not touch so closely the life of the child as it must when it appears in the country. In the country, vice may be said to be more spontaneous and more personal, and for these reasons all the more dangerous to the naturally innocent. The vicious boy may be the only near playmate of the pure-minded girl. Their association in the same small class in school may make it the most natural thing in the world that they should walk home together after school.

Even if the parents realize the moral dangers of this comradeship, it is hard to meet the problem. Any attempt to segregate the child from the evil association involves the possibility of neighborhood un-

friendliness and misunderstanding, from which one naturally shrinks. The parents who have the courage to meet the problem without regard to neighborhood gossip and hostility often find that the attempted segregation is both difficult to maintain and dangerous in itself. The child is almost certain to become conscious of the situation, which results in an unwholesome condition, and the vicious influence is generally militant in its effort to break through the barriers. It is, of course, by no means impossible to meet the situation with success, but seldom easy. The urban mother may segregate her child without depriving it of companionship and without attracting publicity. Indeed, careful urban parents take for granted the necessity of a limited segregation of their children from the well-recognized moral dangers in the community. In neither city nor country is the effort to protect the child certain of success, but in the country it is more difficult.

The clearest illustration of the importance of this problem of moral segregation

in the country appears in the case of the defectives. Science teaches the very grave danger in any community life of children who are morally defective or who are morally weak because they are mentally deficient.

Dangerous as is the ament, or mental defective, anywhere, he is doubly so in the country, because he is less likely to be recognized there than in the city, and he has greater opportunity to corrupt the normal because he is not seen in his true character. If the mentally deficient girl often becomes a prostitute in the city, we must not fail to see that her country sister is likely to poison the morals of an entire neighborhood and finally to become the mother of illegitimate children. The city usually escapes the tainted offspring, because of the sterilizing effects of the prostitute's diseases.

Country workers need to realize the difficulties of moral segregation in the small communities. Some parents admit that they have moved to town to escape the

corrupting influence of bad children belonging to a neighboring family. A great relief would come were it possible, at least, to discover the defectives early and remove them from the community. Science is waiting for the opportunity to protect society from the moral imbecile and the feeble-minded both in country and city, but little progress can be made until the public is educated to see the need of such protection. Education is required before the extent and the character of the problem of the morally and mentally defective child in the country will be appreciated. It is important for the social worker in rural communities to think of the waste of moral forces caused by the effort to undo the evil started by the moral imbecile, by the hopeless effort to reform him. Rural moral forces are too precious to be spent for almost useless purposes, when greater knowledge would show the worker how to meet the situation more constructively. In most cases it is for the welfare of both society and the defective child himself that

he be removed from association with normal children. The significance of this fact will not be appreciated in the country, unless all who influence rural public opinion discover its importance from personal observation and bring it to the attention of the more thoughtful parents. And now is the opportune time.

It would seem also as if the city must have some advantage over the country in the attempt to control amentia because of its greater effort to find the feeble-minded children of high grade by means of tests, clinic work, and the keener attention of teachers and officials to the retarded children. Without doubt in the cities the courts and the police also help to discover defective children of high grade, because in the cities it is so easy for such children to get in trouble in a way that brings them public attention.

It is reasonable to assume that the greater competition in the cities tends to reveal mental deficiency that would be passed by without notice in the conditions

of country life. In the country another difficulty is created by the unwillingness often of teachers and neighbors to give information or to take the responsibility of making public charges respecting defective children, because in a small community everything in the way of criticism or complaint is so personal in character and is so likely to involve many persons, on account of the close relationships in the group, due to the marrying back and forth. Yet the ament in a rural school has the best opportunity to poison morally the children of an entire neighborhood, and this fact sometimes explains the immoral situation which the rural educator and field worker finds.

The greatest problem of all in regard to the rural ament is the added menace such degeneration threatens because of the results of rural migration. No greater country problem exists than the condition that has been so well stated by Davenport:[1] "Likewise in the rural and the semi-rural

[1] Heredity in Relation to Eugenics, 211–212.

population within a hundred miles of our great cities we find a disproportion of the indolent, the alcoholic, the feeble-minded, the ne'er-do-well. I know intimately several such localities and have seen in one family after another how the ambitious youth leave the parental roof-tree to try their fortunes in the city while the weakest young men stay behind, supported by their parents, or earning only enough to buy the liquor their defective natures crave, and are finally forced to marry a weak girl and father her imbecile offspring. Such villages, depleted of the best, tend to become cradles of degeneracy and crime."

Society will surely be hampered in its progress unless the state adopts a policy which will not leave the ament to the indifference and misconception of the small community. We need not only the city psychological clinic; we need also the state clinic. The state department of public education should be prepared to hunt out the defective, and the state needs to be able to provide rational treatment for all

defectives found. Such work must be carried on largely through the schools. Professor Pyle, in the *Psychological Clinic* for February, 1913, has drawn up a very interesting suggestion for the organization of rural clinic work by means of a state-wide examination of school children. No other policy promises to meet this problem. It may seem costly, but only to those who do not realize the burden of the feeble-minded who are without proper supervision.

The rural ament will never receive deserved attention unless social workers are alive to the greatness of his needs. At this point those who realize the significance of the defective child must concentrate educational effort. The demand for the state-wide clinic work along both physical and mental lines must come from the social workers, teachers, and school officials before the legislators can be expected to consider the matter seriously. The educating of schoolmen and schoolwomen in regard to the imperative character of this special problem is no hopeless undertaking. Al-

ready a limited attention to such educating effort has accomplished wonders.

From every side of the problem of amentia, science is showing that society cannot afford to ignore the feeble-minded. In so serious a matter the state must take a larger responsibility. The cost in social evils and in dollars of such cases as this reported by Dr. Fernald[2] is too great for the public to leave the small communities to meet the problem of amentia as best they can. "A feeble-minded girl of the higher grade was accepted as a pupil at the Massachusetts School for the Feeble-minded when she was fifteen years of age. At the last moment the mother refused to send her to the school, as she 'could not bear the disgrace of publicly admitting that she had a feeble-minded child.' Ten years later the girl was committed to the institution by the court, after she had given birth to six illegitimate children, four of whom were still living and all feeble-minded. The

[2] "History of the Treatment of the Feeble-minded," p. 11.

city where she lived had supported her at the almshouse for a period of several months at each confinement, and had been compelled to assume the burden of the life-long support of her progeny, and finally decided to place her in permanent custody. Her mother had died broken-hearted several years previously."

A very aggressive attack upon the problem of amentia in the country is certain to provide unexpected social relief along other lines. It is impossible to know how much the problem of the use of alcoholic drinks in the country is related to the problem of feeble-mindedness. When one has seen how strong the craving for intoxicants is among some country people, without the suggestions and constant temptations provided by the saloon industry in the cities, it is clear that much may be expected of any successful attack upon rural amentia in decreasing alcoholism. The problem of illegitimacy in the country is certainly in large measure a problem related to feeble-mindedness. The moral imbecile and the feeble-minded boy

given to occasional fire-setting are a most serious menace.

When this problem of rural amentia is more successfully met, a great economic gain also must result. The best propaganda carried on by experiment stations and agricultural colleges must fail in communities where a feeble-minded strain by close intermarriage has made nearly an entire community defective or abnormal, or has been a large cause of the constant loss of the ambitious youth, because of their eagerness to remove from such an unfavorable social environment to a city having promise of better conditions. Progress in the control of rural amentia must surely conserve the resources of the various activities that are attempting to improve social conditions in the country. Political exploitation also, in its different forms in rural communities, is tied up with amentia. The largest result, perhaps, of all which may be expected to follow an effective program respecting the country feeble-minded is the bringing of optimism into

the lives of people in some country places who at present are possessed by a pessimism which forms the largest obstacle to social and economic progress.

The church of the small community in its effort to conserve country life must take to heart this fact of the danger of the ament in the country. Nothing will so certainly discourage the substantial stock in the country and so stimulate its movement to the cities as to permit the ament to thrive and enjoy freedom in the country environment. The whole problem needs to be taken in hand by the forces of the state as a matter of efficient administration. Science has already furnished the information which justifies another step in the control of amentia. The country needs the advantages of this new progress no less than the cities, as every student of rural moral problems must recognize. Like all such matters, it is mostly a problem in educating people in the country.

X

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE CONSERVATION OF BEAUTY

Opportunities to realize beauty are among the great advantages of life in the country. The church of the small community may assume a most beneficent social ministration by interpreting these opportunities to its people. Life sours and grows barren when the sense of beauty fades out of human experience. It is indeed often true of the vision of nature's beauty—

> "At length the Man perceives it die away,
> And fade into the light of common day."

Nothing in life fully compensates for so great a loss. It is as if through beauty we penetrated deepest into the eternal life in which "we live, and move, and have our being," and drew into our own little worlds the strength that nourishes all things. What Ruskin has said about the sky is

also true of all the glories of nature. "Bright as it is, it is not 'too bright, or good for human nature's daily food'; it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for soothing and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity, its appeal to what is immortal in us is as distinct as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal is essential."

He who lives in the open country may have fellowship with the very spirit of beauty. His daily work brings him constantly into the presence of scenes such as the artist delights to reproduce and make immortal. If only he has eyes to see he can enrich his soul with wealth that becomes an increasing joy. His opportunity it is

"To see the world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower;
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour."

It must be admitted, however, that many in the country live as John Calvin is said to have done in the presence of the Alpine wonders—indifferent to the great opportunity. The church must accept some responsibility for this. It is open to question whether the church can minister religiously, even in the most narrow sense, while unconcerned about the beauties of life that breathe the very presence of God. Religion must draw a part of its vitality from such experiences as Wordsworth's:

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought
And rolls through all things."

It was recently said that the reason for the low prices of beautifully-bound second-hand copies of standard English poets on sale in a Canadian city was the fact that the present generation was coming into the

possession of books, for which they did not care, that had been brought from England by their parents. If this is true of any country district, it requires no prophet to foresee an increasing city-drift from that territory. The country cannot content one as a mere place for the making of a living. He who has no larger motive is likely to live in the country as a man in exile, longing for the pleasures which the country gives sparingly, and failing to appreciate the qualitative joys which the country is willing to lavish. White's "Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne," which has already been published in more than eighty editions, gives splendid testimony concerning the pleasures possible in the country to the nature-lover who has the ability to make large use of his environment.

It becomes the duty of the church in the small community to conserve the appreciation of the beauties of nature. Many churches in the country appear largely to neglect this splendid ministration. With-

out doubt this neglect reacts upon the church and weakens its social service. Indeed, because of its necessary influence, the country church that fails seriously to conserve the love of the beautiful in every way possible creates a peril. The discovery of the passing beauties of flowers, trees, harvests, outstretching landscapes, is one of the great compensations of rural labor. When these discoveries are not realized, and all things become commonplace, the open country is made monotonous and is brutalized.

No country church, therefore, rightly can fail to assume the role of interpreter of natural beauty. The church should honor its own building and yard. The meeting place ought itself to be a thing of beauty. Rarely is this impossible. Intelligent interest and honest concern will nearly always change the barren, even ugly, church building sometimes to be found in the country into a dignified, appealing House of God. Church papers ought to give more space to this side of country religious

work. The faculties of state colleges ought more often to be called upon to give advice regarding shrubbery, trees, and lawns for the churchyard. Where there is a library, the church people should see that some such periodical as *The Craftsman* is added to influence the community. The appeal to beauty by the church service ought never to be merely a by-product. In some form such as sermons, concerts, lectures, exhibitions, flower shows, a definite appeal may be made every year that will greatly increase the appreciation of natural beauty on the part of the people of the community.

The church should also consciously labor to develop that community spirit which respects its own resources of beauty. Such respect flowers in many social virtues. The inspiration of the church should give vitality to a popular village improvement society. The needs of the church and the school-yard should be given constant attention. All such effort lifts the standard of life. The moral protection that results from

such appreciation of beauty can hardly be overstated. The appeal which is made by a revelation of beauty often sinks deeply into youth, and remains a memory that strengthens character, and purifies. The minister in the country may well think of natural beauty as one of his assets. Ruskin's "Modern Painters" can bring to many a country pastor the change of mind that Henry Drummond says it gave him. Even the words of Jesus have a deeper meaning to the lover of the country's beauty, to him who has learned that "sweet is the lore which Nature brings."

XI

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE CONSERVATION OF GOODNESS

Social life draws its health from morality. It is goodness which provides every worthy thing in human society with its vitality. Morality thus makes society possible, for, void of goodness, human association would prove itself the existence that Thomas Hobbs pronounced "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

The moral resources, therefore, of any community are of priceless social value. It is as true of the group as of the individual —the claims of goodness are supreme. Man's social progress is conditioned by his moral growth. Any attempt to conserve goodness and to express it in worthy activities is an effort which, when successful, means the lifting of the level of human association at some significant point. No

real social problem falls short of social causes. No social remedy meets the final needs of the occasion unless moral reformation is included. Morality occupies no part of life. It demands the right to permeate all life. It follows, therefore, that moral opportunities may be found in ordinary circumstances, and that moral forces need to operate in the common experiences of life. Christianity recognizes this to the full. It proclaims throughout the entire territory of life a universal moral worth. The church that conserves moral values will enter into the commonplace of life and dignify it with the prerogatives of moral consequence.

No institution in the small community has so great a responsibility for developing the moral forces and utilizing them for social welfare as the church. The city church shares this responsibility in a greater degree with other organizations. The country church is in possession of a large part of the moral equipment of the community. The church surely fails if it

conceives its function as merely to make use of the moral forces of the community for its own prosperity. Of course the church never consciously assumes such a position, but since the actual attitude of the church is largely determined by the thought of its leading members, it happens that some churches really do regard their social mission selfishly. The church organization cannot rightly take any other position than that of an instrument. It is in duty bound to lead moral strivings into profitable social activities, to put ideals to work, to bring moral purposes face to face with real needs. The church discovers moral resources, invigorates moral purposes, and trains moral energy into efficient social service. In conserving the moral resources of the small community the church needs to emphasize moral activities rather than sentiments, a positive rather than a negative morality, moral causes rather than results.

Religion is always in danger of being exploited by persons who are socially pathological. Even normal persons easily form

the habit of conceiving of virtue as a sentiment rather than a volition. Morality, true to its instincts, leads to activities. Religious work in some small places is made nearly hopeless by the irresponsible talker who expresses fine sentiments, but who so acts as to lose the respect of the community. The moral burden of such persons is well understood by every experienced religious worker in the country. It needs to be noticed, however, that these difficult people are at times the logical outcome of the attitude that the church itself has taken. Professor William James, in his discussion of habit, has written clearly concerning the danger of creating ideals that are not brought to a discharge—in other words, of producing sentiments without regard to action. The church may unconsciously give the impression that attending religious services is a virtue, when the people need to be taught that the purpose of all such gatherings is inspiration for service. The teaching of the church may give the impression that the instrument is

itself the end. It certainly brings questions to the mind of the social worker to find in a small community the greater part of the moral energy of the church being spent in supporting many religious services that lead to nothing concrete, when the moral conditions in the town imperatively demand specific efforts.

The country churches, as social workers often know by sad experience, sometimes preach a negative morality rather than a positive one. An atmosphere of repression is produced by constant emphasis upon prohibitions. Christianity ought surely by this time to be free from the interpolated asceticism which has no proper place in its teachings. Youth, who might respond to a positive appeal to do concrete wholesome service, flee the church that considers that its ministration has to do mostly with the infliction of trivial prohibitions. Christianity in its early history did not become a militant moral force by emphasis upon prohibitions. The country church that takes its work seriously will kill out so-

cially unwholesome elements by substitution. It will by instinct assume a positive attitude toward the community at every point, and provide opportunities for the doing of things worth while. Such a program splendidly conserves the moral resources of the small community.

The country church needs above all else to think in terms of moral causes. It cannot conserve the moral resources of the community unless it functions with reference to the causes that operate morally. The minister must interpret significant scientific information that makes for moral and social efficiency. Parents especially need concrete instruction at many points that a morally ambitious organization, such as the church, should give. He who will take the trouble to uncover the moral life of some of the youth in many country places will appreciate the significance of this. Why should not the churches get scientists who can make a popular appeal to give courses from time to time upon matters that concern the moral and social

interests of the community? Such courses are given in the cities by organizations that have a part of the moral and social purpose that belongs to the country church. When churches create a demand for this kind of work, workers will be found to undertake it. The writer's experience recently in giving a week's course in sociology in the church of a community in New Hampshire has demonstrated in one case that more people appeared to respond to such an undertaking than most ministers would have supposed.

The most powerful moral causes are born in the home. The church that ministers to the social needs of the community will certainly teach constantly and with precision the solemn duties and magnificent opportunities of parents. The parents must be taught that they cannot with success farm out their children morally by making use of organizations such as the school and the Sunday school. It requires greater skill to develop moral efficiency in the home through the teaching of

the church than to start some organization that may for a time meet the problem created by the failure of the home. The church, however, needs to think of its problem in terms of causes, and to utilize its moral energy in making wholesome conditions at those points where character is first made. The temptation to attempt to change results while causes are allowed to continue is always present. It is true, however, that social progress comes best by attention to causes; and, by its teaching and practice, the church should enforce this truth with reference to the practical, social problems of the community.

XII

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE CONSERVATION OF TRUTH

Religion conserves the highest values of life. It assures trusting men and women who respond to the appeal of the spiritual that their deepest cravings are trustworthy, and, in this manner, religion protects the sources from which issues the wholesomeness of human society. When true to its instincts, religion adds to the appreciation of spiritual values an energy that forces these values to become abiding motives of gracious, persistent, and sacrificing social service. Assurance of the credibility of truth men and women deeply crave. Religion, in satisfying this human craving and thus conserving trust in truth, creates an unequaled energy for labor that makes for social betterment.

The social service of any country church

is in no small part determined by its attitude toward truth. Any organization of individuals meets the same temptations that the individuals themselves encounter. There are subtle but persuasive influences that operate upon a church in such manner as to make the organization sometimes unconsciously deficient in its passion for truth. These influences are more captivating in the small community than in the city because of the closer contact of persons. This condition of disloyalty to the finer conception of the claims of truth may develop even when the organization is most zealous in pressing for recognition as the community teacher. Outward prosperity does not measure inner worth. The history of the Church abounds in warnings that the spiritual mission of any body of religious persons must not be thought of in an easy-going, self-satisfied, formal manner. A vital passion for truth precedes a vigorous social activity. This explains why the social service of the Church is so largely conditioned by its teaching concerning the area

of truth and by its success in inspiring regard for truth.

Any small community suffers when it is commonly thought that religion belongs to a part of life, that it is a field of experience rather than an attitude that enters into all experiences. This is a fundamental matter, for no religious zeal expresses itself socially in reasonable manner when life is conceived of as divided into sacred and secular. Even those most satisfied with such a conception find it impossible in concrete cases to draw the line of separation between the two parts of life; and the most unscientific observer notices in individual cases that causes in one field cross over to produce results in the other. The Christianity of Jesus suggests at every point that all life must be thought of as sacred, except such elements as result from the sinful desire to destroy or limit this sacredness. The church, it would seem then, must take spiritual possession of the entire territory of activity in a community, proclaiming the absolute prerogative of truth

in every concrete social interest. The church that fails at this point can at best assume merely a limited social service and must find itself without all of its resources for successfully carrying on its limited work.

The rural community especially needs to realize the permeation of truth in all of its life. Farming is an industry that must be carried on in a field where great natural forces operate without the usual degree of human control, and, at times, not according to human interests. Agriculture has a hazardous character, expressed in such concrete difficulties as droughts, frosts, insect-pests, and over-stocked markets. The farmer, more than most men, because of personal experiences, may come to think of life as a gambler's chance, and of success as largely an accident. This fatalistic tendency in the thinking of farmers has been noticed by writers, just as tendencies of thought in other occupations have received attention. The great danger, however, in this tendency of rural folk is the decreased interest in knowledge as a means of con-

trol. The scientist finds in his failure to control natural law a challenge for further investigation, while the farmer's experience often contributes to the upbuilding of a fatalistic philosophy of life.

Any occupation that requires a constant struggle with natural forces tempts one to become fatalistic. The sailor and physician meet this temptation as well as the farmer, but the larger number involved in the case of the farmer makes this rural temptation of greater social significance. If enough individual farmers in any community become fatalists, the spirit of the entire community is colored and depressed. The town settles down to accept whatever comes, and even degeneration may begin. It is interesting to notice that, although no science can be so important socially as that which has to do with agriculture, it has been one of the slowest to develop. Fatalists do not become enthusiasts for knowledge. Who, however, can doubt the great need of an increase of knowledge in most rural communities regarding the

proper methods of conducting the complex and difficult business of farming?

The church should accept responsibility at this point. It must set itself against the current and insist upon its members' realizing their obligation to take a proper interest in those matters that have to do with individual and social well-being. Some, from sheer laziness, turn to the spiritual as a refuge from the necessity of facing actual situations in this life that demand clear-headed thinking. The church should teach a philosophy of conduct that is born of the belief in a well-ordered and morally rewarding universe. It may wisely assume a distinction between spiritual truth and human knowledge, but it ought not to encourage the idea of a separation between the two. The farmer must be saved socially by his finding himself within a sacred, truth-permeated world as he plows, plants, and reaps. He must value knowledge as the human construction of a part of the truth of God, born of a divinely given instinct, and realize that by despising the

handiwork of conscientious men he does no honor to the greater eternal truth. The prosperity of the rural community is determined largely by knowledge and efficiency, by mental vigor and physical skill. Science is never more needed than in the work of the farmer. The church needs to appreciate this, and then to discover that its own prosperity is related to the prosperity of the community it serves. The unprosperous farmer must either lower his standard of life or change his business, which usually means removal from the community. This lowering of the standard of life means a decrease in the possible contribution of one person to the social ministration of the church—perhaps the creation of a social problem. If the discouraged farmer or his sons go city-ward, there is likely to be a loss to the community that would not have happened had the church been able to help the farmer meet his problem successfully. The church cannot become socially efficient and neglect its individual resources.

The church that holds up to its members the conception of an unbroken world of truth, sacred at every point and God-created, needs to finish a good work well begun. It ought to assume in the small community the largest obligations for inspiring regard for knowledge and reverence for truth. This really means that the church in its teaching must keep near to the actual, immediate, and everyday needs of its members. Of course this is largely a question of the attitude of the pastor, and his attitude is often decided by his training and instinctive sympathy. One who watches a church in a small community at work can hardly fail often to observe that little results socially because little effort is definite and related to concrete social needs. When a church shows regard for such truth as is pertinent to definite, social conditions, social progress is certain. The history of Christianity is suggestive as to the possibilities of such definite social effort on the part of the church.

The church that ministers to the life of

the community will have a large conception of its educational work. The minister may not teach agriculture, but it appears fair to ask that he inspire his followers with such a regard for knowledge and truth that it will assure the success of any agricultural club or similar enterprise that may be wisely started. The minister, also, if his church is to be socially efficient in its relation to the community life, must build up the conception that social, moral, and spiritual conditions are related to causes and that reforms must also operate by means of causes. There are conditions that a community cannot tolerate because they are producers of contagious evils. Such evils, perhaps, can be removed only by the substitution of new circumstances that will bring forth benevolent, character-building causes. The saloon may remain until a recreation club is successfully organized. The community often tolerates great evils because so many persons are not taught successfully that what a community sows that must it also reap. It is doubtless un-

fortunate that ministers usually have studied philosophy so much and science so little. It is not always the instinct of the minister to think of causes in the realm of social and moral experiences. Science has a tendency to make one look always for causes and this tends to conserve effort.

The church can be inspired to a realization of the social significance of truth by self-examination at times. It may be a revelation to the socially inefficient church to trace out in detail without prejudice its effective social influence, but it comes to a better social self by an honest survey of its work. In cases not a few such an investigation leads to one rational conclusion—the church can help conserve the moral resources of the community only by losing its individual life by uniting with another organization. Moral resources are too sacred to be used in keeping alive two churches where social welfare calls for one effective community church.

XIII

THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND THE CONSERVATION OF HUMAN EXPERIENCES

The social resource which has most significance for the future of any community is the potential character of its people. The church of the small community is therefore supremely tested by its efficiency in conserving the moral capacity of the people to whom it ministers. No social service of a community church can properly be an end in itself. The church must have a social vision and a community program because moral character is greatly influenced for good or evil by social conditions. Interest in the means of social advance must not dull, however, in the consciousness of the church the ultimate purpose of all it does. It serves socially that it may minister morally.

The church of the small community

should conserve morally to the largest possible degree the significant experiences that deeply operate upon the character of men and women. These tremendous events of life, charged with potential good or evil, stand out clearly in the rural or village community. Human joys, sorrows, struggles, and tragedies are not so largely hidden from the community as they are in the great urban centers. People do know what is happening to their neighbors, and they care also when they have moral sympathy. The lasting influence of these momentous experiences of life is to no small degree decided by the sense the individual has of the sympathy, understanding, indifference, or malice of his community associates. Little can happen in the small community that does not excite social interest. No one is more conscious of this fact than he who is called upon to assume with self-control an experience of great joy or endure with courage an overwhelming sorrow. Men and women often pass through these experiences and are forever after different

from what they were. It is the business of the church of the small community to protect people from danger as they pass through these testing ordeals. That this may be done it is necessary that the church create in the community the wholesome social attitude which comes from moral sympathy. The church can do this service by becoming the skilful interpreter of the profound meaning of the crises of life. Narrow attitudes of thinking and feeling must be driven out of the minds and hearts of people by a deep sense of human need and brotherhood. To believe this impossible is to doubt the practical efficiency of the teaching of Jesus.

The people of the small community often have an attitude of morbid curiosity regarding the critical experiences that individuals have to face. The moral danger of this both for the individual who meets the crisis and for those who watch him with unwholesome interest is very great. To prevent this moral injury on these occasions when character is supremely tested, the con-

structive influence of a church ought always to be felt, and morbid curiosity pushed aside. Of course this is to expect much of the church, as anyone who knows the weaknesses of the small community will admit, but surely it is not unreasonable to ask Christian people to express their good purposes in practical ways and at the places where there is special need of moral self-control. Morbid curiosity may be replaced by kindly sympathy. To bring this substitution about, it is necessary only to lead people to do unto others as they wish others to do to them. In any case, it is a serious mistake for the church of the small community to view this unkindly curiosity with complacency. If character is to be conserved, a practical concern must be felt for those experiences that profoundly influence people.

The church must certainly guard its own institutional influence from any reasonable criticism. It is deeply unfortunate for the entire community when these critical events of human experience are merely

exploited by the church for moralization. It is fellowship both in joys and sorrows that is needed—not preaching. The church is tested by its ability to enter into the experience of moral ordeal and the church fails unless it discovers in such experiences the common human and spiritual meaning. What we share with others in life we feel; we do not detach ourselves and use the results of our fellowship as mere homiletic material.

Perhaps in all one's life there is no more profound experience than that which gathers about the birth of a child. When many people in the small community by keen spiritual insight feel the deep significance of the coming of a new life in a home, a wholesome social atmosphere is certainly being maintained. The parents may have their own moral purposes deepened by being made conscious in natural, friendly ways of this moral sympathy. How unhappy for the community when the deeper meaning of the coming of the new life is lost in trivial, even morbid curiosity! On

such an occasion one may often see most clearly the real character of the spirit of a neighborhood or the characteristic moral culture of a community.

The wedding also has great social and moral significance. In the small community it is sure to attract attention. It is an experience that has in its influence peculiar dangers. A vulgar, ostentatious wedding may for a long time bring into the small community most unhappy influences. An element of coarseness may, for example, be given emphasis at the wedding, and in large measure the moral value of the experience may be spoiled. It is also true that a natural, wholesome wedding with a moral fellowship at its basis may elevate the purposes of many men and women who witness it.

And what may not be said concerning the moral opportunity of sickness and death? Perhaps here we find the supreme test of moral fellowship. The sympathy must be sincere; its expression so far as is possible practical. Mere sentiment usually shows

its inner heartlessness, and usually causes in him who suffers an irritation that has moral consequences. He who has thoughtfully observed the community reaction to death knows the peculiar moral problems that gather about it and about the funeral. The experience of death is indeed a moral opportunity for the church or the revelation of its moral inefficiency.

Some of the less serious experiences have in the small community moral value for the church. The home-coming of the son or daughter and the community reaction to it may mean much to the family concerned. The struggle with adverse circumstances, a struggle generally known throughout the community, may give to those who pass through the ordeal a very vivid appreciation of the sympathy or indifference of the community, and years after they may show the influence that the community attitude had upon them.

In order to bring wholesome influence upon those who are meeting the morally significant experiences of life, the church of

the small community must prepare for such experiences before they happen. The effort to meet a crisis when it comes is often impossible, for the proper basis for service has not been provided. The right-minded pastor of the church of the small community will be always realizing the significance of the experiences that do make character and trying to keep his church people in that spiritual sympathy with suffering that will enable them to serve people who need them when the occasion arises. The trying experiences bring to men and women their great moral dangers and victories, and the endeavor to make wise use of such important events of life must form a part of the program of the church that would conserve the moral wealth of the small community.

XIV

THE MINISTER OF THE CHURCH OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY AND HIS PERSONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The character and efficiency of the minister largely decide the success of the constructive social service undertaken by the church of the small community. The minister may be loath to accept the burden of so great a responsibility for the success of the program of the church, because of the handicaps he experiences in his position. It is of course true that his position is not an easy one, but moral leadership is never free from trials that test the temper of men's souls. So long as the minister is conscious of moral leadership, he realizes that his position has its compensations. It is his honest doubt of the value of his service, a scepticism by no means rare in these days, that furnishes the supreme test of his moral devotion.

The minister who thinks of his church in causal terms and who develops its program of social service with a sense of strategy surely ought to carry his thinking one step farther, and regard himself and his opportunities from the same view-point which he has taken to judge the work of the church. A serious study of his ministerial service for the purpose of obtaining efficiency should greatly increase the usefulness of any minister of a rural or village church. Such a minister certainly should have a very clear idea of the resources that he personally has because of his position.

One of his resources is the opportunity he has to conserve his health. If a man has intelligence to use the opportunities that the rural and village community provide, he has the best possible basis that environment can furnish for the establishment of efficient health. The man of the city is seldom out of doors enough; he usually does not exercise in the open air enough. The gymnasium is a poor substitute for a long country walk. As a

matter of fact, the minister in the country often fails to utilize his opportunities for physical efficiency, and his city brother occasionally by a greater care conserves better his physical vitality. The country minister surely ought to take seriously his moral obligation to keep in good physical condition and to make use of the opportunities provided by his environment.

During a season unusually favorable for winter sports, I have heard of only one minister's making use of its recreational advantages, and that was a city pastor in charge of a large church who has led several Saturday afternoon snowshoeing expeditions to which all interested persons were invited. Some of our small communities in the northern part of our country need to take to heart the splendid optunities furnished during the winter for common outdoor sport and recreation. The minister who appreciates the opportunities for wholesome pleasures and vigor-making recreation furnished both winter and summer in most small communities is

likely to realize also the social value that these outdoor activities may have in making people wholesome, healthy, and willing to cooperate. In any case he is a foolish man if he throws away with indifference the means given him by his environment for the making of a life of physical vitality.

The minister who works in the country or small village also has a great advantage over men in the city because of the close contact with nature provided by the open country. This is one of the privileges of life, although unfortunately it is one often neglected or unrealized. There are people who, during a short vacation in the country in the summer, come to have a more vital relationship with nature than many who live in the country all through the year. Certainly this need not be true. The minister who serves country people and has little appreciation of the poetry and scientific interests represented by the rural environment has lost much out of his life. His personal loss also becomes a loss to the community, for rural people

need always preachers who can interpret to them the beauty of country life, so that they may enjoy to its fulness the wealth given to them by their environment. When country life is robbed of its beauty, when the poetry of the long-stretching fields, of the meandering rivers, of the herds knee-deep in meadow-grass makes no appeal, rural existence is often hard, barren, and even brutalized. Rural social health demands that the intimate relation between rural people and nature should yield those romantic and poetic elements which all through human experience have made common things inspiring and profound.

The country minister may well cultivate his ability to appreciate nature. He is fortunate if he is a lover of Wordsworth, for no poet can teach him more regarding the poetic material in the common experiences of rural life. Ruskin's "Modern Painters" also may furnish a key to the vast wealth of beauty contained in cloud, sky, water, and even space. Surely Whittier will not be forgotten by the mind that

hungers for spiritual insight from fellowship with nature, nor will Burns be neglected by those who crave larger brotherhood and deeper sympathy. The material for poetic education abounds and every man may happily follow his choice. He who, with a sterile imagination, attempts to serve country people, who finds all poetry dull, who never even in the bewitching days of childhood came close to the heart of nature, has undertaken a great task with needful preparation at one point at least sadly lacking.

In his nearness to his people the minister of the church of the small community has a third advantage. He may enjoy an intimate knowledge of personality, just as he is given the conditions for a close contact with nature. This opportunity to know people deeply is a very great privilege in ministerial service. Knowledge of men and women need not be obtained merely from books. It is difficult indeed to live in the country without discovering much about human motives, the weaknesses and the

strength of character; in the city, on the other hand, it is not easy to uncover the deeper life of men and women, because they are hidden in the crowd. Life moves on rapidly and for the most part the relations between persons must be superficial.

The complaint that the country minister most often makes is that his people are narrow in their appreciation. At least it has seemed in conversations with ministers of country churches that this criticism of rural people was most often made. This human fault of narrowness in one's interests would no doubt be as frequently regretted by the urban minister, if he knew his congregation as well as the country minister knows his. The rural minister must recognize the great advantage of this close relationship between him and his people, and he is short-sighted indeed if he permits his intimate and significant contact to discourage him, because of the revelation it makes of human weakness. This close association of people and pastor in the country makes it possible for the rural

and village minister to realize the needs of those for whom he works and to measure more accurately the value of the service of the church. What the minister finds in the lives of his people is both his test and his challenge.

The minister of the village or the country church has, when his time is wisely conserved, the chance to study and think in a way that gives him substantial intellectual results. It is true that he loses inspiration and other advantages that belong to the urban minister, but his environment tends to make his intellectual experiences penetrating. In the quantitative life of the city it is difficult for the mind to get full value from its activities. There is so much that enters the thinking that there has to be a decrease of intensity. Many city thinkers develop a crowded mind, rather than one that is profound. They think many things, but nothing deeply. The very limitation imposed upon the reading of the minister of the church of the small community tends, when op-

portunities are wisely used, to develop solid attainments in the serious study of human experience.

It is a happy fact that the minister of the small community is becoming so interested in books that are concerned with practical social problems. The work of the minister is seldom better than his thinking. Usually he thinks in harmony with the character of his reading. A minister of a country church recently said that it was difficult to get books of a sociological character from a ministers' lending library in a certain city, although books of theological character could easily be had. This was due in part to the greater number of theological books in the library, but also to the great demand for books relating to social problems. Since this library lends books especially to country and village preachers, this desire for books on social matters is a most striking revelation of the social viewpoint of the country minister.

This interest in books of social character certainly promises much for the future of

the rural church. Men who live in the country and who love the country are just becoming conscious of their social requirements and resources. The great need in the rural ministry is men who, while they live deeply in the every-day life of the present, have social minds that see afar off. It is to such leaders that rural people turn with profound craving for spiritual inspiration. The men and women in the country who hunger for social progress realize their constant need for spiritual penetration. They require for their daily duties the dynamic social impulses contained in the faith of Jesus. Country people especially, because of necessary association with nature, are morally mutilated by daily experiences that do not uncover inherent spiritual truth, that do not accomplish moral discipline. The open country must take possession of its peculiar character-making opportunities or grow morally sterile. The best of the country shrivels when rural idealism faints. Wholesome rural life requires besides greater production, better

marketing, and more recreation, the spirit of moral adventure and spiritual conquest.

The country minister is asked, therefore, to weld together spiritual vision and social motive. To a man who thinks this can seem no small task. It demands of him social enthusiasm and spiritual vigor, science and faith. In his obligation the rural minister discovers his supreme opportunity, a part in the unique moral crusade which in our day must decide the character of country life for many years to come.

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